

James Madison to Henry Lee, March 3, 1834. Contains a post script for Charles Carter Lee. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO HENRY LEE. MAD. MSS.

Montpr., March 3, 1834.

Your letter of Novr. 14 came safely tho' tardily to hand.

I must confess that I perceive no ground on which a doubt could be applied to the statement of Mr. Jefferson which you cite. Nor can it I think be difficult to account for my declining an Executive appointment under Washington and accepting it under Jefferson, without making it a test of my comparative attachment to them, and without looking beyond the posture of things at the two epochs.

The part I had borne, in the origin and adoption of the Constitution, determined me at the outset of the Govt. to prefer a seat in the House of Representatives; as least exposing me to the imputation of selfish views; and where, if anywhere I could be of service in sustaining the Constitution agst. the party adverse to it. It was known to my friends when making me a candidate for the Senate, that my choice was the other branch of the Legislature. Having commenced my Legislative career as I did, I thought it most becoming to proceed under the original impulse to the end of it; and the rather as the Constn. in its progress, was encountering trials, of a new sort in the formation of new Parties attaching adverse constructions to it.

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The Crisis at which I accepted the Executive appointment under Mr. Jefferson is well known. My connexion with it, and the part I had borne in promoting his election to the Chief Magistracy, will explain my yielding to his pressing desire that I should be a member of his Cabinet.

I hope you received the copies of your father's letters to me, which were duly forwarded; and I am not without a hope that you will have been enabled to comply with my request of Copies of mine to him.

With friendly salutations